COLORADO
Hazardous Materials
& Waste Management Division
Department of Public Health & Environment

How were people exposed to contamination from Rocky Flats in the past?

Rocky Flats historical public exposure studies
https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/rocky-flats-historical-public-exposure-studies

For years, the public lacked information about what went on at the nation's nuclear weapons facilities. The Rocky Flats Historical Public Exposures Studies provided communities with information about the types and quantities of Rocky Flats contaminants that moved off-site and also developed cancer risk estimates for those releases.

The Rocky Flats Historical Public Exposures Studies project we administered was overseen by a 12-member Health Advisory Panel appointed by former Governor Romer. The Health Advisory Panel provided independent scientific oversight for contractors conducting the Historical Public Exposures Studies and facilitated public participation in the process. Panel members were selected to represent a wide range of interests, affiliations and expertise. Some panel members were selected based on their scientific expertise - toxicology, epidemiology, risk assessment, meteorology, environmental modeling, medicine and radiation health physics. Other members were chosen based on their community connections – a resident who lived near Rocky Flats and a local government official.

Researchers identified radioactive materials and chemicals released between 1952 and 1989 from the former Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant as part of a nine-year Historical Public Exposures Studies on Rocky Flats. The purpose of the studies was to determine potential cancer risks to residents living in surrounding communities resulting from past emissions from the site. The studies focused on estimating any increased cancer risk to residents living or working in surrounding communities during the plant’s operation up to 1989. The studies addressed only past releases that were carried off-site and led to exposure of the public. On-site releases, worker exposure and worker health effects are addressed in other studies.